

THE PHILADELPHIA FAILURE
REVIEW OF GRANT'S RENOMINATION

by
Theodore Tilton

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CAMPAIGN TRACTS.

The Philadelphia Failure,

A

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THE SUCCESSFUL FAILURE AT PHILADELPHIA.

Now that the Philadelphia Convention has hushed its shoutings over the President's re-nomination, and submits itself in silence to the sober-second thought of the American people, let us consider what was its duty, and how it left this undone.

It ought to have resented and defeated the President's attempt to re-nominate himself, instead of which it became the very instrument for accomplishing this scheme. It ought to have impeached him at the bar of public opinion for his numerous violations of law, instead of which it suffered these outrages to go uncondemned. It ought to have exposed the frauds perpetrated in his custom-houses, instead of which it blindly shut its eyes to these enormities. It ought to have denounced his double-dealing with civil service reform, instead of which it made this reform impossible by enacting the two-term principle. It ought to have protested against his federal intrusions into local affairs, instead of which it made a high-sounding declaration in favor both of state-rights and their violator. It ought to have denounced the corrupt incumbents whom the President has retained in office, instead of which it became an accomplice for their retention in power during another four years. It ought to have commiserated the country on the administration's ignominious surrender to England, instead of which it calls this shamelessness an "honorable compromise." It ought to have laid bare the failure of the President's policy with the Indians, instead of which it took no notice of the recent bloody massacres on the frontier, or of Gen. Sheridan's report of wide-spread Indian hostilities. It ought to have rebuked the President's attempt, through his partisans in Congress, to stretch martial law over the South, instead of which it silently joined in the scheme to carry

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the next presidential election at the point of the poyonet. It ought to have given a stinging rebuke to the President's extraordinary lavishness of public offices among his relatives, instead of which it sees in the nepotism of a ruler no crime against the state.

Three-fourths of the Philadelphia delegates consisted of those Republicans who once sympathetically aided and abetted the impeachment of Andrew Johnson for violating the tenure-of-office law. But Grant's offences against the laws have been more numerous than Johnson's. If there was legal ground for the impeachment of the one, there is far more for the impeachment of the other. We challenge even Mr. Boutwell, with his celestial rhetoric borrowed from "the hole in the sky," to prove Grant less guilty than Johnson of naked violation of law. It was in violation of law that the President, without the authorization of Congress, employed the navy in a warlike act against Hayti. It was in violation of law that he sold arms to one European nation to be used against another. It was in violation of law that he disposed of the Secor and Chorpenning claims. It is now in daily and notorious violation of law that he surrounds himself with military instead of civil secretaries.

These are types of his violations of the plain letter of written statutes. Scores of cases can be added where-in he has violated what Montesquieu called "the spirit of the laws." He has violated the spirit of the Supreme Law by usurping for himself functions which that charter reserves to the states alone. He has violated self-government by suspending the operation of local law. He has violated public liberty by intruding himself into political conventions to control them in the interest of his administration and re-nomination. He has violated the moral sense of the people by such arbitrary displacements from position as that of Mr. Sumner from the chairmanship of the Committee on Foreign Relations, and by such reten-

tions in office as that of Leet and Stocking and other leeches on the public revenue. He has violated common morality by taking private gifts and rewarding the givers with public emoluments. He has violated the decent usages of gentlemanly breeding by entering newspaper offices and demanding the removal of offensive editors who have fallen into his disfavor by criticisms on his maladministration. He has violated the common standard of private character by over-addiction to the wine-cup.

The shallowest of all answers to these charges is that he was re-nominated unanimously. But unanimously by whom? Not by the Republican party—which he has severed in twain, like a house divided against itself. Every man who has partisans—and no public man is without them—can get a unanimous vote from his own friends. Three years ago the President had a party; now he has only a part of one. That noble, royal, invincible party no longer exists. The President has put an end to it. Almost any other man could have united it; almost no other could have divided it. To its chosen chief was reserved the sad distinction of destroying it. He has wrought more mischief in our politics than ten Andrew Johnsons. Nay, more—if the House and Senate had continued in the same sensitive and inflamed temper toward a law-breaking Executive as they manifested in May, 1868, President Grant would have been impeached at Washington instead of being renominated at Philadelphia.

There are two aspects in which this renomination is especially a calamity to the country; one as a blow at official honesty, the other as a blow at popular liberty.

As to public honesty, if an American President can enrich a whole army of relatives by bestowing on them the public funds, why may not other public officers do the same? For instance, if the President gives lucrative posts to his father, his brother, his brothers-in-law, his cousins, his nephews, and his wife's con-

nections, why may not Mr. Thomas Murphy in like manner call together the whole circle of *his* kith and kin, and portion out among them the salaried and fat places of the Custom House? Why may not Mr. Patrick Jones do the same with the clerkships of the Post Office? Why not Mr. Casey the same at New Orleans? Why not every other principal office-holder the same everywhere—so that the 50,000 offices in the gift of the Administration shall thus be considered the family property of a few favored appointees? In other words, why should not the whole government be turned at once (like the presidency itself) into a continental gift enterprise?

As to public liberty, if in time of peace the military power is to reign supreme over the civil, then farewell republicanism! Indeed, the Republican party itself, as one reads its debates in Congress, has largely lost (or stifled) its instinct for republicanism. Mr. Sumner's fearful indictment of the President, accompanied as it was with proofs and specifications, was answered how? By an admission of the guilty facts, coupled with the astounding extenuation that they were frivolous. Is there nepotism? Yes, but it is a trifling crime. Is there gift taking? Yes, but it is a venial offence. Is there law-breaking? Yes, but it is of no consequence. Like Senator Carpenter, the Philadelphia Convention considered none of these things worthy of notice.

How quenched is the ancient spirit of Saxon liberty! How our forefathers, both of Old England and New, would have resented such encroachments by the government on the people! John Hampden, rather than pay 31 shillings and 6 pence for ship-money, made a revolution in England. The Bostonians, rather than pay 3 pence per pound on tea, made a revolution in America. The genius of Liberty is like a sensitive plant—it need not be struck, but only touched, to show when it is wounded. President Grant has violated the

laws more flagrantly than King Charles I or George III; and it argues a deadness to the sentiment of liberty to suffer such violation to pass unrebuked.

Has it come, then, to this—that the American people are so far subservient to the existing military regime as to be indifferent to the supremacy of civil law? Not so. They are gathering wrath against the day of wrath. Unless the present tendency of the Administration is rebuked and reversed, we predict that if Grant is reëlected—which may Heaven forbid!—the very men who were lately cheering his renomination will be demanding his impeachment.

One thing more. War against the south—not of bayonets, but of passions—yet none the less war—is the necessary result of Grant's renomination. Senator Morton struck the key-note of the Grant campaign when he said, "It is the old battle over again between the boys in blue and the boys in gray." Gerrit Smith had previously said the same thing in another form, "The anti-slavery battle is not yet fought out." So the re-nomination of the man who uttered the maxim, "Let us have peace," is to serve as the basis of a renewal of war. The promise of peace is to be cut down like a shriveled stalk and cast as fuel into a re-lighted fire. Such is the moral of Philadelphia.

Not such, to our minds, is the true philosophy of the hour. We believe that the anti-slavery battle *has* been fought out. Slavery is abolished; and the Thirteenth Amendment makes its re-enactment impossible. The negro has been invested with the right of suffrage; and the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments make his disfranchisement impossible. Legally the negro stands exactly where the white man does. Socially whatever stigma rests upon him is far more oppressive in the north than in the south. Mr. Sumner's civil rights bill is more needed here than there. For instance, a Methodist bishop, only a week or two ago, protested

in the *Tribune* against the exclusion of a colored Methodist preacher from the common wayfarer's privilege of refreshment at the Dorlon Tavern in Fulton Market. That same bishop, and the entire General Conference of that same denomination, was then sitting in the churchliest city of the north, in whose public schools colored children and white are forbidden to associate! If therefore what Gerrit Smith calls the anti-slavery battle is not yet fought out, its chief remaining battleground is in the north rather than in the south. There is now no existing difference of opinion concerning the negro in which the south takes one side, and the north the other. To array one section of the union against the other on the negro question is to create a false issue which has no existence in reality. In reviving this antagonism, the Philadelphia Convention has failed to adjust itself to the circumstances of the time. Feigned and fictitious is the contest which Senator Morton prefigures when he re-paints the boys in blue as once more fighting the boys in gray. The boys in blue have put off their blue; the boys in gray have put off their gray. Former union soldiers now mingle freely with their fellow-citizens of the south, and former Confederate soldiers do the same in the north. From the moment when there was an end to the political distinction between a white skin and a black, from that moment there was an end of the partisan distinction between a blue coat and a gray.

The Cincinnati Convention, recognizing this great fact, "built upon the event in marble." It dared to say that there is no longer a war, no longer a rebellion, no longer a traitor. It buried the past. Its motto was, "Let bygones be bygones." It clasped hands across the bloody chasm.

But the Philadelphia Convention, not content to see the south accepting the verdict of the war, not content to see the former slaveholders subscribing to the

doctrine of political equality, not content to see the original secessionists pledging themselves to the perpetual union of these states, not content to see the rebels volunteering to keep inviolate the national debt, not content to see the whole south joyfully accepting the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments and seeking to be at peace not only with the negro but the north,—not content with all this, the Philadelphia Convention now proposes to fight the finished battle over again; re-converting our present friends into our former foes; re-imperiling the peace and safety of the negro by unnecessarily creating a political antagonism against him in the south; and re-kindling a quenched animosity between the sections at a moment when both are equally anxious to be of one mind and heart. In other words, in the city of brotherly love the Philadelphia Convention inaugurated a policy of unfraternal strife.

Let us, therefore, draw a parallel between the two Republican parties.

Cincinnati, fresh from the people, initiated a long-needed movement of reform; Philadelphia, drawing its breath from the public offices, clamored like claquers in a theater for a continuance of the administration and the re-appointment of its fifty thousand paid stipendiaries. Cincinnati declared for the one-term principle; Philadelphia was as hush as the grave concerning this central and main-spring measure of civil service reform. Cincinnati demanded that our foreign policy should ask for nothing that was not right, and submit to nothing that was wrong; Philadelphia, forgetting this maxim of Jackson, connived at the Alabama surrender, and gave this ignominy the name of honor. Cincinnati protested against elevating the military over the civil law; Philadelphia entertained itself with a picture of Grant on horseback, as typical of the administration which it seeks to maintain in power. Cincinnati denounced the

abuses which the government has feared to investigate ; Philadelphia was a pre-arranged mechanism, subordinating the individual freedom of its delegates to affect a unanimity which did not exist, by an enginery which itself was one of the chief abuses of which the administration has been guilty. Cincinnati was for universal amnesty; Philadelphia was for limiting this clemency. Cincinnati denounced the distribution of public offices among persons who had given gifts to the President ; Philadelphia represented the interests of these givers and receivers. Cincinnati denounced nepotism; Philadelphia bandaged its eyes into blindness to it. Cincinnati indicted the President as a violator of law; Philadelphia gave a sycophant's compliment to his practical wisdom. Cincinnati proposes to unite the North and the South on the basis of liberty, equality, and fraternity; Philadelphia determines to tear open afresh the healed wounds of the two sections. Cincinnati is for peace ; Philadelphia for war. Fellow countrymen, choose between them !





A Political and Literary Journal.

THEODORE TILTON,

EDITOR AND PUBLISHER.

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